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FLEXIBILITY THROUGH
PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OF CAREER WORKERS
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

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women and men would rather be working less: 11 percent of the women and 8 percent of the men preferred part-time employment to their current full-time status" (p. 150).

Federal Personnel Ceiling Limitations

Even though there are obvious advantages of part-time scheduling to both management and workers, the fact remains that there are few permanent part-time workers. Silverberg (1972) has observed that the system that governs part-time employment acts as a barrier to expansion of the concept. Part of the problem lies in the definition of Federal part-time employment as less than 40 hours per week, when full-time employment is 40 hours. She points out that the complex personnel ceiling system that allots a slot to all employees whether or not they are full-time permanent workers confuses prospective managers. Managers need to know that part-time workers may be counted under either the full-time permanent ceiling or under the derived ceiling.

Agencies which have not filled all their permanent full-time slots may wish to assign their part-time employees to permanent full-time slots. During the fiscal year, such part-time employees may be shifted to slots included under the derived ceiling, which in addition to part-timers includes temporary and intermittent workers. The chief requirements are that each employee must be assigned a ceiling slot and that agencies do not exceed their personnel ceiling allotments on the last day of the fiscal year.

The part-time employment concept has not received much attention during the budget process. An HEW Federal Women's Program report (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973a, p. 137) makes this observation:

The budget process and employment ceiling controls have created an artificial dichotomy between full-time and part-time employment--a dichotomy which need not persist if the facts are understood. These controls have emphasized full-time employment and given little attention to part-time. The effect has been to focus management attention on full-time with no incentive to establish and maintain an optimum employment mix.

Recommendations for overcoming this problem center around the development of alternative methods of accounting